

magical formulae and incantations (khāthā cf. Textor 1960:80-98; 87-79). It was one of the branches of occultism (saiyasāt [McF. 1940:895]), the ancient science which sought by magical means to control the forces of the heavens and of earth and to manipulate them in behalf of man's interests and enterprises, whether economic, aesthetic, personal, or other. Some of the other branches were dancing, singing, the agricultural rites, boxing, boat- and house-building, and the life-cycle rites. This powerful wisdom was contained in sacred books at the Buddhist temple where it passed, usually orally, from priest to priest. It could be transmitted away from the temple between men, if they had once been ordained. Its transmission was controlled by ritual teacher-pupil relations, and its use by formal request through presentation of a sacred offering, the khwan khao (cf. Duan's Tale p.44). Unauthorized magic did not work because it was not validated by its supernatural discoveries; improper ritual behavior incurred strong supernatural sanctions. Instruction in magic and its use was free except for the token offerings and coin in the khwan khao. The only rigid obligation was a public annual homage-to-the-teacher ritual (vai khru).

The persons authorized to handle any part of saiyasāt were called mō. In the context of medicine, mō was translated "doctor." To keep the modern and ancient traditions separate, we shall use the Thai word "mō" throughout this paper for the practitioner of the ancient occult art, reserving the word "doctor" for physicians trained in modern medicine.

The field of medicine was split into categories or specialties. There were, for instance, the exorcisers of spirits or disease objects (mō phī), and the curers (mō raka) who made up deomotions particularly for element imbalances. Astrologist-foretellers (mō dū) analysed disturbances due to astral confluences; soul-ceremonialists (mō khwan) carried on the khwan-strengthening rites; and the mō san specialized in love and hate magic. On a lower plane were masseurs (mō nuat) and midwives (mō tamyāe). No specialist could operate in the field of another unless he had formally acquired that specialty. No limits, though, were set on the number of specialties a person might acquire so that all their lives, mō were open to and seeking new knowledge by pilgrimage, discussion, or visit to a Chinese or modern druggist. The major curing specialties were only in the hands of males, but men and women both practiced the minor branches of midwifery and massaging.¹⁹

19. A woman medium (khonsong) who cured when possessed by the spirit of a male mō was not entitled to be called mō. Her special circumstances are discussed in "Magic and Maturity."

overlap at all. Magic was wielded by men to gain power over spirits, persons, elements, and forces. It had either social or personal benefits. The role of highest social benefit, corresponding to the liang di in women, was the khwan-specialist (mo khwan) who conducted the life-cycle, khwan-strengthening (tham khwan) (for persons and for the rice) and many other ceremonies for the mature khwan. This role demanded men of the highest qualifications in probity, erudition, and personal dedication. Men also had the formulae for curing, house- or boat-blessing, invoking guardian spirits (san phre phum), etc. Men could make protective amulets to render the wearers safe from bullets, knives, spirits, and all sorts of hostile forces in the world.

On the other hand men's magical objectives could be aggressive and hostile. The gamut of amulets, missiles, love-oil, and incantations (Textor:passia) showed the potential for attack and why the converse need for invulnerability was so strong. Men had a nurturing (liang) role, but only for non-human beings, e.g. buffalo, pet birds, and guardian spirits of house and land. Subverting this role for hostile ends, they obtained possession of the ghost of a recent corpse by gathering the drop of oil at the chin, and nourishing it (liang) for use in sorcery. For a man, nourishing something gave control.

All of the powers of men's magic were available to women on request for any purpose, hostile or not, but the "owner" had to be the mediating agent.

A woman's magical knowledge was linked exclusively to her female task. It did not give power over people. It could not be destructive. No female sorceress existed in Bang Chan. No woman feared the magic of another woman in childbirth nor at any time. A woman's magic was devoted solely to promoting the processes of growth and life. Thus it controlled the searing heat of the fire, invoked the Spirits of the elements, and helped at various points in childbirth. It handled the soul of the Rice Goddess and of Mother Su, guardian of children. It restored any frail and wandering khwan to its proper bodily abode. Such was a woman's magic.

To insure separateness the respective provinces of magical activity were ringed with sanctions. Contact with a woman's skirt, undergarments, or menstrual blood completely negated any of a man's protective amulets (re tattooing, cf. Textor: 202). Though this reflected the traditional avoidance between sexual phenomena and Buddhism, it might also indicate a tacit moral evaluation of the magical powers of men and women: the powers for growth were ultimately ascendant over those for power, for men had nothing that undid a woman's powers. Though women were easily prey to men's magical control, as by

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[787] love philters, and they might be "sealed up" in childbirth or attacked by khun, their capacities to "lians" were inalienable. If any woman tried to tamper with men's magic, a severe sanction fell on her. She became the host of the phi krasu who lived from faeces like a dog.⁵⁹ On the other hand in a legendary case a man who tried to perform one of the women's rites to the Rice Mother was destroyed.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the Buddhist sanction of sinfulness fell on any man using magic for evil purposes.

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[793] The single channel where women might operate in the men's field of curing, power, clairvoyance, etc. was as a medium (khon song), through possession by a spirit. If possessed by a male phi, she could do everything a phi could do. Men were never mediums. Bang Chan's only medium was possessed by a male phi.⁶¹ During seances she talked and sat like a man, and gave out phras and advice to an eager clientele. Only while wearing the yellow robe of an ordained priest did a man enjoy a generalized eufunction comparable to a woman's nurturing capacity. His powers in many respects were far greater than hers, but limited in her special province.

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[593] ⁵⁹ My finding is based on Textor's interesting facts (pp. 305-330). He described the hosts of phi krasu as married women ("never a maiden") in their 30's or 40's, who were "invariably" trying to learn love magic. Such women were, however, violating their sexual function as nurturant and worse, their status as "auk" women, ritually established by the holy fire! Ostracism by the community, implemented by fear of contagion through spittle, lasted even unto the deathbed. The phi krasu's daughter alone was immune while giving the devoted care which was every mother's due in her old age, for Bang Chan desired no alienation of this filial duty even out of fear of the terrible sanction on the mother.

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[776] ⁶⁰ The legend ran that once a man instead of a woman went into the rice field to perform the ritual inviting of the Rice Goddess to stay there and be cared for with food and offerings during her pregnancy. The goddess he met was not an immature and tender child-like spirit, but the adult pregnant being who was powerful, flirtatious, and frightening. Baffled by her beauty he fell in love with her, and ran away with her, vanishing forever. The goddess, affronted because an improper person arrived to deal with her, destroyed him.

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[717] ⁶¹ In Bangkok, monkey, cats, or spirits may also possess women.

The medium's powers as a $\text{m}\bar{\text{q}}$ appeared to be entirely equivalent to a man's.

To summarize, the fire-rite enabled a woman to acquire fruitful habits, new status, and the right to handle magic. The implications of the ritual clarified the role of women and the associated symbolism of rice, and by contrast the role of men. The nature of the magical resources available to each sex laid the groundwork for a career in midwifery for women, and for men, a career as a $\text{m}\bar{\text{q}}$.

Comparison of the respective rites of maturation points up certain contrasts and parallels between men and women. Women achieved compassion and maturity through their sexual role, while men achieved these qualities by denying their masculinity. Even a bounty of merit, which a man achieved directly by ordination, came to a woman through procreation, by the ordination of a son, or as a wife if her husband were ordained. Many activities were done by either sex, but each had certain exclusive proprietary areas. If women were donors of nourishment, men too had their donor roles, sexual, economic, religious, etc. Each paralleled the other in the formal steps to maturity, building the way for a complementary social and marital partnership for which both were ritually and psychologically well prepared.⁶²

62. In contrast, note the psychological ill-preparedness, leading to severe tensions in Ceylon (Oberwiesekere, *passim*).